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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform The Republican National Committee: Subpoena B April 25, 2007

We are now going to consider the second subpoena to the Republican National Committee.

Earlier this year, the Committee learned of a partisan political briefing that was provided by the White House Office of Political Affairs to officials of the General Services Administration. This briefing — which reported on the results of the 2006 election and provided the GOP plan of attack for the 2008 elections — was held at GSA headquarters and was broadcast over a video feed to GSA offices nationwide. At the end of the event, the GSA Administrator asked, “How can we use GSA to help our candidates in the next election?”

Several aspects of this partisan, strategic event may have violated the federal Hatch Act.

Despite the possible violation of federal law inherent in this event, this presentation apparently wasn’t a one time occurrence. A White House spokesperson described the GSA briefing as a “regular communication from the White House to political appointees.” And, according to press reports, Karl Rove and his top aides have been giving similar presentations to political appointees on a regular basis throughout the entire six years of the Bush Administration. The *Los Angeles Times* noted yesterday that at these presentations, “employees said they got a not-so-subtle message about helping endangered Republicans.”

The presentation at the GSA was given by a White House official, J. Scott Jennings. But he and his assistant corresponded with GSA officials about the event using their RNC e-mail accounts. In order for the Committee to conduct oversight of this and similar briefings, it must request e-mails sent through RNC accounts. The White House systems may have no record at all of these briefings.

On April 4, the Committee asked the RNC for a specific and limited set of e-mails sent or received by White House officials using their RNC accounts. Specifically, the Committee asked for:

- E-mails that relate to the January 2007 briefing at GSA;

- E-mails that relate to similar political briefings given at federal agencies or to employees of federal agencies; and
- E-mails that relate to the use of federal resources to assist Republican candidates for office.

To date, all the Committee has received in response are excuses, delays, and requests to use “search terms” that are so limited that they would exclude the e-mails we already received from the GSA.

As a result, I am asking the Committee to approve this subpoena. The subpoena asks the RNC to provide the e-mails described above. It also asks for several previously requested documents, including policies and procedures regarding the use of the RNC e-mail accounts, and communications from federal entities regarding the preservation, storage, or destruction of e-mails.

This is a narrow subpoena and it a reasonable one, and I urge its approval.